

Highlights of recent activity and accomplishments of our MIRECC faculty

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We are excited to share the news that the Pittsburgh Site of the VISN 4 MIRECC was awarded a VA *Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Health Research*. The program in Pittsburgh was not only funded, but it received a score of 1.1 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being outstanding. Beginning in July, 2009, there will be funding for two fellows - one physician and one clinical psychologist fellow for 2-year fellowships. **Gretchen Haas, PhD** will be the Associated Health Fellowship Director for the program and **Robert Sweet, MD** will be the Physician Fellowship Director. We are very excited about this endeavor.

Our VISN 4 MIRECC submitted several applications on rural health, primarily focused on chronic disease management. **Amy Helstrom, PhD** (Philadelphia) and **James Tew, MD** (Pittsburgh) put together an excellent application to enhance behavioral health care management services in 5 rural CBOCs in VISN 4. The focus in the CBOCs is on all veterans, not just those in primary care, making this is an extension of the BHL. We wish them luck on the review.

Mark Salzer, PhD was interviewed for an NPR story, *Some Students Fear Openness On Mental Health*, that aired on “All Things Considered” on December 2, 2008 (www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97713906). The story talks about college students who are expelled after disclosing they are suicidal or have other mental health problems.

Several individuals have been added to our MIRECC family recently, please help is in welcoming them.

Joe Savage joined the Philadelphia site as a Data Manager/Statistician. Joe came to us from the City of Philadelphia Office of Supportive Housing. He has a significant interest in homelessness, so we will be sharing him with Vince Kane, MSW, Director of the new VA Center for Homelessness housed at the Philadelphia VAMC.

DeNaira Butler joined the Philadelphia site as an Education Coordinator. DeNaira previously worked as a Program Coordinator at the Atlantic Cape Community College in the Department for Continuing Education.

Lauren Matukaitis Broyles, PhD joined the Pittsburgh group as an investigator. Lauren recently received her PhD in nursing from the University of Pittsburgh and is finishing her Masters Degree in bioethics. Her area of interest is nurse-led alcohol screening and intervention in the inpatient general medical setting.

Irene Hurford, MD joined the Philadelphia group as an investigator. Irene comes to us from UCLA where she was a MIRECC post-doctoral fellow. Her area of interest is cognitive remediation for individuals with schizophrenia.

Bobby Chakravorty, MD joined the Philadelphia group as an investigator examining addictions and sleep disorders. Bobby comes to us from our own MIRECC post-doctoral fellowship program.

Jon Walker joined the Pittsburgh group as an Information Science Specialist. He is currently working on his PhD in Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh.

Amy Helstrom, PhD joined the Philadelphia group as an career development awardee and will be remaining in Philadelphia after her award. Amy comes to us from Boston.

Sukumar Rao, MD, mentored by **Gretchen Haas, PhD**, recently completed his NIMH Fellowship, graduated from the Medical School at Pitt and will be going on to a psychiatry residency training at Cornell University's Weill Medical College.

Raquel Gur, MD, PhD has transitioned from a MIRECC employee to MIRECC WOC investigator. Raquel will principally be mentoring Irene Hurford and will continue to contribute to our success.

Lauren Matukaitis Broyles, PhD: Grant Award, VISN 4 MIRECC Pilot Funding
Assessing **R**eadiness for **N**urse Implementation of Alcohol **S**creening, **B**rief **I**ntervention, and **R**eferral to **T**reatment (SBIRT) [**RN-SBIRT**]

Jesse Suh, PsyD: Grant Award, VISN 4 MIRECC Pilot Funding
Using Brain-Behavioral Markers to Predict Resilience in OEF/OIF Veterans with Early Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Symptoms

Ronald Ehrman, PhD: Grant Award, VA Cooperative Studies Program (CSP)
Risperidone Treatment for Military Service Related Chronic PTSD

John Kasckow, MD, PhD: Grant Award, American Foundation of Suicide Prevention (AFSP)
Development of a Manual for Patients with Schizophrenia and Suicidality

Robert Sweet, MD: Grant Award, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
Plasticity of Auditory Cortical Circuits in Schizophrenia

Chinman M, Lucksted A, Gresen RC, Davis M, Losonczy M, Sussner B, Martone L. (2008). Early experiences of employing Consumer Providers in the VA. *Psychiatric Services*, 59, 1315-1321.

Gellis, LA, Lichstein, KL. (2009). Sleep hygiene practices of good and poor sleepers in the United States: An internet-based study. *Behavior Therapy, 40*, 1-9.

Weintraub D, Stewart S, Shea JA, Lyons KE, Pahwa R, Driver-Dunckley ED, Adler CH, Potenza MN, Miyasaki J, Siderowf AD, Duda JE, Hurtig HI, Colcher A, Horn SS, Stern MB, Voon V. Validation of the Questionnaire for Impulsive-Compulsive Disorders in Parkinson's Disease (QUIP). *Movement Disorders* (in press).

Upcoming Events:

An educational collaborative offered by the Geriatric Education Center of Pennsylvania (GEC/PA) in conjunction with the VISN 4 MIRECC and GRECC, as well as the University of Pittsburgh and Temple University.

Program Dates:
Pittsburgh, September 11, 2009
Philadelphia, October 16, 2009

To request receipt of a brochure upon availability, please contact Sarah Aerni at sea33@pitt.edu.

...our MIRECC turns 10 years old this year!

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